A SERIOUS ADVICE TO THE CITIZENS OF LONDON,

By ſome MINISTERS of the GOSPEL in the ſaid CITY:

Upon occaſion of the HORRID MURDER And DREADFUL DEATH OF *NATHANIEL BUTLER*, An high Malefactor

Beloved in Chriſt,

AS we thought it a great duty lying upon us, before the execution of the ſentence of death upon *Nathaniel Butler* to lay out our

our ſelves to the utmoſt for the promoting of his ſpiritual and eternal good; in frequent praying with him, or for him; in endevouring to convince him of the ſuperlative greatneſs of his ſins, and in ſpreading the freeneſs of the grace of God in Chriſt before him, according to the penitential workings, we obſerved in him. So (having done our duty to him, (who is dead under the ſtroke of juſtice) and as is hoped with ſome ſucceſs too through the grace of God, for which we bleſs him) we humbly judge there is a further duty incumbent upon us, unto you the inhabitants of this famous City, who have been ſpectators of this Tragedy, in a ſerious recommending of this providence to you and the duty which it calls for.

Pſal. 9 16. *The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth.* And ſurely this latter Age (though an Age full of ſin) hath not ſet before you a more dreadful inſtance of mans ſinfulneſs, and Gods juſtice (though in the end ſweetned much with mercy) then that which in and upon this notorious Malefactor hath been laid before your obſervation. And therefore we cannot here be ſilent, but muſt take this advantage with all humility and affection to your ſouls good, plainly to open our hearts to you.

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By ſome (we know before hand) we ſhall be ſleighted and cenſured as men too buſy, and may be, as men too credulous; but in the preſence of God we can ſay, our aim is publick good and the diſcharge of our conſciences, and therefore we are not diſcouraged.

And we are not wholly without hope, but that ſome benefit may be reaped from theſe few lines, which here with all ſincerity we do preſent upon that late providence which hath been before you. That providence we ſay, which like the *Cloud* is on one ſide very dark, on the other ſide bright; very dark as to the mans ſin, but bright as to Gods mercy nnto him, as is believed.

Tis the daily and inward grief of our ſpirits, God knows it, that our Miniſtry is ſo ſucceſſeleſs, that we ſee ſo little fruit of the word preached by us, that in a City where there is ſuch plain and powerful preaching, ſuch horrid ſins ſhould be committed:

This is a lamentation and ſhall be for a lamentation. But poſſibly ſome ſecure ſinners may be a little ſtartled and awakened by this terrible judicial hand of God; and ſo a word ſetting in with this providence may be more effectual then many in an ordinance. We cannot but comply with the will of God in the uſe of all means for the furtherance of your ſalva-

tion. And oh! that God would ſo bleſs this diſpenſation that you all may *hear and fear and ſin no more.*

Touching the ſad occaſion, we will not inlarge upon that: the hainous murder, the abominable uncleanneſs, the wicked theft, of which *Nat: Butler* was guilty (of the former but once, which we ſpeak not by way of extenuation; for that's too much, of the two latter very often) as alſo the ſhameſulneſs and dreadfulneſs of his death: theſe we paſs over, as being very well known to all of you. Neither ſhall we intereſt our ſelves in any narrative of the workings of God upon his heart, during his impriſonment, and at his execution; (though herein we could ſpeak much as being (for the moſt of us) very often with him in this time, and narrow obſervers of him.) Nor ſhall we expatiate upon ſome of thoſe great truths of the Goſpel, which this famous inſtance doth lead us to; Namely that ſometimes it pleaſes God in the ſovereignty and prerogative of his grace to ceaze upon the greateſt ſinners; and out of the courſeſt rubbiſh to erect the monuments of his unlimited mercy. 1 Tim. 1. 16. The Lord doth ſometimes take the vileſt wretches, and hangs them out as patterns of his infinite love that the freeneſs of his grace may be admired, and the greateſt of ſinners may be incouraged; but ſtill in the way of

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Faith and *Repentance*, we do not, we dare not limit the Grace of God, as to exclude this Notorious and Bloody ſinner from it; nay we have good hope, that through the infinite Mercy of the Father, and the All-ſufficient Merits of the Son, he is accepted to eternal Life. Indeed, when we conſider the horribleneſs of his ſin, the greatneſs of his joy, after a ſhort humiliation (yet deep and through we hope) we eaſily conjecture, that ſome will queſtion both the prudence of any publication, and the truth of his Converſion. But we will meddle with neither of theſe, leaving men to jude of the former, and God alone (who ſearches and knows the heart) to judge of the latter.

Waving therefore all theſe things, our only deſign and buſineſſe in this application, is, to preſs upon you (the inhabitants of this City) to ſome of whom we are more neerly related in our reſpective Charges) the ſeveral duties, which do naturally reſult from this Providence.

We would exhort you in the firſt place, To be thankful to God for his Reſtraining Grace; which though it be ſhort of his Renewing Grace, yet tis with all thankfulneſs to be valued: Oh! bleſs the Lord, who keeps you from thoſe ſins which this poor Wretch was guilty of, that you are not Adulterers, Theeves,

nay, Murderers and Malefactors, to be *punished by the Judge*; this is the Lords mercy. 1 Cor. 4. 7. *Who makes you to differ from others?* Have not you the same Natures? Have not you the Seed and Spawn of all wickedness in you? And should God leave you to the baseness of your own hellish hearts, would not you also run to all *Excess* of sin, and that with *Greediness too?* When you read over this sad Story, we beseech you lay your hands upon your hearts, and say, What a mercy is it, I was neither the *Murderer* nor the *Murdred!*

We desire you to mourne over the crying sins that are to be found amongst us. Oh! the Scarlet sins that swarm in *London*, even in *London*! Swearing, Drunkenness, Uncleanness, Profanation of the Lords Day, Contempt of the Gospel, and of the Ministry thereof; nay, even Blood-guiltiness is to be found amongst us! Should not your Souls, like the Soul of Righteous *Lot*, be *vexed* within you for these things, 2 *Pet.* 2. 7? Should you not all come up to be *Ezekiel's* mourners, in the remembrance of them, *Ezek.* 9. 4? Especially, considering that these things are done in times of Reformation, and in a place of Vision, even in *London*, where the Light of the Gospel shines so gloriously; where the Word is Preached so plentifully and powerfully, even there

there these abominations are to be found. Will you not lay them to heart?

And what reason have you to admire the patience of God to this *City?* Tis a wonder *London* is not made as *Sodom*, that desolation doth not seize upon your houses, that you are not all swept away with the Beesome of suddain destruction, that you are not hung upon the Gibbet as Spectacles of Gods vengeance to all the Nations round about! What? so much provocation, and yet the City to stand! Oh the Patience and Long-suffering of God! Doubtless, if God had not a *Remnant* amongst you, who seek him daily, and fear his Name, you had been laid desolate long before now. *Isa.* 9.

We need not from hence to stir you up to submit to *Government*, and to bless God that you live in a place where Laws are Executed. What a *Chaos?* what a Wilderness of wild Beasts should we be, if Malefactors were not punished? What Confusion, Cruelty, Barbarousness, would overspread all, if by wholsome Laws, and the care of good Magistrates in the Execution of them, we had not some Boundaries set to the Lusts of men? whether would the heart of man run, if there were not some reins upon it? Tis said the Law of God will not keep men from sin, but seeing it will

not, tis mercy we have the Laws of Man: Many are afraid of the *Gallowes*, which have no ſenſe of *Hell*.

This great Sinner is repreſented to you as an eminent inſtance of the Grace of God, and ſo we hope he was. Tis very neceſſary therefore, we ſhould here inſert a Caveat againſt the abuſing of this Grace of God. How apt are we with the Spider to ſuck Poyſon, where with the Bee we ſhould ſuck Honey? How many will be apt from hence to encourage themſelves in ſin, and to ſay, *Let us ſin, that Grace may abound*, Rom. 6 1. Or, let us ſin, for Grace will abound. Man is not more prone to any thing, then to catch at eminent Acts of Grace, and to make that *Fewel* to his *Luſt*, which God intended only to be *Food* to his *Faith*. And never was there any age wherein there was more of this Spirit of Preſumption, then this wherein we live; inſomuch, that upon this very account, ſome of us were very inclinable to think, That 'twas better to have the ſtory of this man ſuppreſſed then publiſhed. But ſince providence hath ſo ordered it that it doth ſee the Light, we cannot but annex to it an Antidote againſt preſuming. Sinners, do not pervert this Grace of God; God lets you have it, to keep you off from the rock of deſpair, not that you ſhould run upon the rock

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of presumption. Deut. 29. 19, 20. If you sin you may have mercy, but if you presume to sin, can you then expect mercy? Grace rejected may yet save you (though that will cost you dear) but oh tremble to abuse the grace of God to incourage you in sins!

God sometimes gives some rare instances of his grace to notorious sinners that none may *despair*, but he is very choice in these that none may *presume*. Tis true, upon repentance the greatest sinner shall find mercy, but how do you know, that God will give you repentance? How many are in the same condemnation that this offender was, that die without any such work upon them? we affectionately beseech you and warn you, not to *turn this grace of God into wantonnesse*.

These things we hint in general; More particularly we shall address our selves to you in the several capacities wherein you stand.

You the *Right honourable Magistrates of the City*, with all submission, and yet with all boldness we exhort you to do your duty. Tis not enough for you to punish sin when 'tis before you, but you are to endevour the preventing of it, you see what is the sad fruit of *Ale-houses, Whore-houses*, and such places, we hope your zeal will yet continue, nay be heightned in the suppressing of them. Down with them,

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Down with them, ſpare them not; they are the Divels Shops, and let him have no Free-Trade amongſt us: If you will, none ſhall have ſo many Cuſtomers as he. How many Labourers drink that away at theſe houſes, which ſhould maintain their wives and children with bread? How are the youth of this City debauched at them? where they have their Gaming, Cheating, Whoring; and what not? Oh let your Reformation be ſevere and throughout in this particular! But herein bleſſed be God, we have great cauſe as wel to commend as quicken the zeal of many. We heartily wiſh that thoſe who have power in the *Suburbs* of the City, would be as active in the reſtraining of ſin as you are; that thoſe places and perſons which you will not indure in the City (the naming of which would foul our pen) might not be held up and harboured there; otherwiſe it will be ſmall advantage to ſmother Whores out of one Hive, when they have another ready to receive them.

We hear and fear tis too true that Prieſts and Jeſuites (thoſe Romiſh Locuſts) do ſwarm amongſt us in the City and Suburbs: We beſeech you for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, and for love to the Goſpel, to put forth your power to the utmoſt for the diſcovering & ſuppreſſing of them: And the rather, becauſe they and their party

party are so bold, as to intrude themselves upon prisoners condemned to die, to pervert them from the true Religion. (for this attempt they were bold to make upon *N. B.* before he was executed.)

We should also speak to our selves, and to our *reverend Brethren* in the Ministry. Doth not this providence speak something to us? Should we not from hence be stirred up in our several congregations, more vigorously to reprove sin, and to deter men from sin? Whither will sinners go, if we let them alone? Let our preaching be lively, quick, powerful, by Gods blessing, it may be a means to prevent these abominable practises; However let's do this and then let our hearers do what they will, their *blood shall be required at their own hands.* Ezech. 3. 18, 19. We shall be free from it. Let us beat down drunkenness, Adultery, &c. and such scandalous sins; and while we labour to preach down unbelief, let us take heed that presumption and gross sins do not break in upon us with a mighty breach.

Should we enlarge upon these things, we should be tedious. Our principal intendment was to speak a word to you, the people and Citizens of the place which we shall dispatch with all plainness and brevity. And here we will

will only take the liberty of advising you in the Notion of *Governours* and *Governed*.

You that are *Governours*, (we mean Governours of families) give us leave to set in with this providence, and to stir you up, to make more conscience of the Family-duties and engagements, that lie upon you, in reference to your children and Servants. Probably (if things be not mis-represented) had there been a conscientious discharge of these duties in the Family, where this young man lived, he had never come to this sad end. But we had rather awaken then censure; Was not that a brave resolution of *Joshua*? *I and my house will serve the Lord.* Josh. 24. 15. Gen 18. 9. Can you have a better Evidence of sincerity towards God, then a faithful comming up to relative and Family-duties? Do not parents that send up their children to you, put a great trust into your hands? Are not their children dearer to them then all their outward comforts, and shall they miscarry under you for want of care? Will not their blood be required at your hands, if they perish through your neglect? will it not be sad to have children and servanns to rise up in judgment against you and to bring in evidence at the great tribunall of Christ? *Lord my Fa-*

Father never minded me! Lord my master never regarded me, I might sin, he never reproved me, I might go to hell, it was all one to him, will not this be sad? will not this be sweet to you, when you come to die to be able to say, Lord I have *walked in my house with a perfect heart?* Psal. 101.2. Have you no love to religion, to propagate it, and to provide for it's flourishing when you are dead and gone? Doth not your neglect of family-duties make all the endeavours of our godly magistrates, and of godly ministers to be ineffectual and frustraineous? God hath put it into their hearts to do good, but tis but little, they can do in publick, because you are so remiss in private. And tis the desire of our souls to beat down sin but we groan under the sense of sad disappointment, and this is one reason of it, *what we do at the Church is undone by you again in your Families*; No setting on the word, no praying over the word &c. Oh that these things might be as so many spurs in your sides, to quicken you to family-duties.

Set up prayer in your Families; There's a curse pronounced upon the Families, that do not call upon God. The Lord be merciful to the thousands of Families in the City, where

where there is ſcarce a prayer by the maſter of the family, from yeer to yeer. How can ſuch hope for the bleſſing of God to be upon them, who, though he gives mercy freely, yet *he will be ſought* unto for it? Ezek. 36. 37. How can ſuch look for Gods *bounty*, who deny him his *worſhip*? Doth not *prayer* procure all your Family-comforts, and ſanctifie all your family-comforts? *Morning* and *Evening* call upon God; and call in your ſervants, let them not want the benefit of prayer; 'twil be poor to *feed* their bodyes, and to *ſtarve* their ſouls. If you *eate* together, by all means *pray* together.

Catechize your children and ſervants; inſtruct them in the fundamentals of religion; would you keep them from error in the Head, from looſneſs in the life, make conſcience of this duty. How excellent, how neceſſary, how profitable is this ordinance, and yet how ſadly is it neglected, we may in a great meaſure blame you for the many Hereticks, and erroneous perſons, with whom we ſwarm in theſe dayes.

Read and open the Scriptures to them, but do this with all humility and ſobriety, or elſe there will be danger. Theſe are the Magazine, the Treaſury of all knowledge, able to make you and yours wiſe *to Salvation*;

on; Let the *word of Christ dwell richly* in you; and in all that belong to you

See that they frequent the *publick Ordinances* let them follow you to the house of God, not out of state, but in love to their soules; and when they are there, see they keep there, that they do not run out again to *Ale-houses* and *Taverns* (as too many do, to our grief and your shame be it spoken) when a publick Ordinance is ended, call them to an account. see what they remember, wherein they profit, how they relish the word; this is to do good indeed to their soules.

Keep them to a strict observance of the *Lords-day*; you will not let them trifle away your days, then you'l hold them to their work, Oh! let them not trifle away the Lords day. Why do your children and servants stand gazeing at your doors upon the Sabbath? Call them in, put them upon, reading wholsom books, and other exercises which are proper to the day; be not partakers of their sin.

What ever liberty you grant them at other times, hold them to a close sanctification of the Sabbath. And spend this day with them, in *prayer*, *repetition*, *singing of Psalms*; This is to make your Families as so many *little Churches* of Jesus Christ. How little conscience do the generality of you make of Sabbath

bath-duty; we might ſadly bemoan this before the Lord. For your ſelves you can make that day which is a day for Phyſick for the ſoul, to be the Day for Phyſick for the Body; you cannot ſpare time all the weeke long, you'l take it upon the Lords day. And for your children and ſervants, let them walk in the Field, play in the ſtreets, ſleep in their beds, or drink in Taverns, 'tis all one to you! Will God beare this from you? Certainly, this will be bitterneſs in the end.

Do not indulge your ſervants in *idleneſs*, that is the bane of youth, the Devils in-let to all temptations.

An idle perſon is like tinder that will take every ſparke that falls upon it, let them be out of imployment, 'tis a thouſand to one, but preſently they are in ſome ſin. And yet thoſe that know how to uſe their Liberty, let them have it ſometimes for lawful recreations, but this we leave to your prudence.

In the purſuit of your own pleaſures and conveniences have a care of your Families; Many of you go to your Country houſes (we condemne you not for it) but what becomes of your ſervants? As *Eliab* ſaid to *David*, *with whom have you left*

thoſe

those few sheep in the wilderneſſe? Whilſt you are in your pleaſant gardens gratifying your ſelves in your creature-enjoyments, who takes care of them that are left behind to pray with them, to inſtruct them, to ſee they ſanctifie the Sabbath; the health of ſome Maſters bodies is the ruine of their ſervants ſouls.

Reverend Mr. *Stork* an eminent Preacher in this City was wont to make this matter of much complaint.

Set them in all things a good example, if they ſee you can ſtrain in defrauding others, they'l eaſily come to ſtrain in the defrauding of you; let them ſee you fear to ſin and that will be an awe upon their ſpirits againſt ſin.

Take your Apprentices out of religious Families in the Country; Many of you are puniſhed with vexatious ſervants, you may thank your ſelves for it; you take your Apprentices by the pound, not by good education, who will give moſt, not who will deſerve moſt, and you ſmart for it afterwards.

But how do theſe Heads ſwell upon our hands, though we do but name them! Theſe are ſome of the things which we ſhould preſent to the ſerious conſideration of you, who are *Governours* of Families; and the Lord make them uſeful to you.

In particular, it is of great uſe to prevent much wickedneſs to look to the keys and doors of your houſes and to have them in your own cuſtody not in your ſervants, that ſo an occaſion of ſinning may be cut off from thoſe that

ſeek ſuch occaſions as moſt fit for their pernicious deſigns, keep up Diſcipline, or rather reſtore it again; How is it fallen in theſe times, how is it almoſt loſt amongſt us in the City; The reins which your predeceſſors held with a very ſtrict hand, are very looſe in yours; many of your ſervants will do what they liſt, and you let them alone; we do very much lament the low ebb of Diſcipline and Government and judg that to be one Cauſe of the many diſorders which are among us; we heartily wiſh it may be reſtored in Church, in State, in Families, if this be wanting, all things run up to ſtrange confuſion.

A Word to the Youth and *Apprentices* of this City, and we have done. Oh that you would hear us now, leaſt you *mourne* at the laſt, and ſay, *How have we hated inſtruction, and our hearts deſpiſed reproof? And have not obeyed the voice of our Teachers, nor inclined our ear to them that inſtructed us.* This *Great Offender* was one of your Rank, had he taken the advice of Gods Word, his ſin had not been ſo great, nor his puniſhment ſo terrible. Of all, we fear, our counſel to you will be the moſt ſucceſsleſs; Youth is raſh, inconſiderate, vain, proud, but ſometime or other you will remember what we ſay.

Take heed of *leſſer ſins.* Little ſins will make way for greater ſins; if you ſip of ſin,

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you'l be drunk of it at last. How modest is sin at first, but when 'tis gratified, it growes impudent. This poor man lately executed, first he began to game, then to steal, then to Whore, and then to Murder.

Be careful o fyour company: associate with them that fear God; say unto them that are vain and wicked, *Depart from us, for we will keep the Commandments of God*, Psal. 119.115. Bad company is the way to corrupt and spoil you: *Can a man touch pitch, and not be defiled?*

Read the Scriptures much; by them you must stand or fall to all eternity; when we walk by you in your Shops, we see many have their Shop-Book in their hands, but few have the *Bible* in their hands; the Shop-Book is open, but the Bible is shut.

Entertain high thoughts of Holiness and holy men: The froth of your wits runs out too often in jeering godlinesse; but take heed, that's not a thing to be dealt withal. Many of you count sin to be gallantry, and Religion but a low and disgraceful thing. God convince you of your folly.

Frequent Publick Ordinances, especially upon the Lords day, because you have not opportunity so to do upon the week days. You'l find more comfort in the Word and Prayer, then in all your youthful delights.

Keep

Keep the Sabbath; You have ſix dayes, let God have one; can he have leſſe? God out of ſpecial reſpects to ſervants, hath inſtituted and ſanctified this day. How can you hope to keep an everlaſting Sabbath in heaven, if this Sabbath on earth be profaned by you. Many go to Tiburn lamenting the profanation of the Lords day, as that which uſhered in all their wickedneſs.

Every day ſpend ſome time in private prayer; 'tis but riſing a little the earlyer, and going to bed a little the later; you ſhall never be the worſe for that time you ſpend in the Service of God.

Be ſubject and obedient to your Maſters; ſtudy how to pleaſe them; bear with their paſſionate infirmities: *Do not purloyn but ſhew all good fidelity, that the doctrine of God our Saviour may be adorned*, Tit. 2.9,10. Be diligent in your Callings; if you be idle, Satan will get an advantage. The ſitting bird is eaſily ſhot, and the ſtanding water gathers filth.

Love thoſe that curb you, and reſtrain you in wayes of ſin; they are your beſt friends: 'tis better to be held in, then to have a wicked liberty; 'tis better to have luſt reſtrained then ſatisfied. Be not angry with thoſe who cannot ſee you damne your ſouls, and let you alone.

Enter upon the wayes of God betimes, the ſooner

ſooner the better: Shall the devil have the beſt draught, and ſhall God be put off with the Lees and Dregs. *Eccl.* 12. 1.

Live alwayes as in Gods ſight, and know, if you ſin, God will certainly find you out one time or other. Alas how many wayes hath God to bring the moſt hidden works of darkneſs to light; ſometimes by ſtartling mens own conſciences to an accuſation of themſelvs, ſometimes by awakening ſome of their complices to the diſcovery of the reſt. If you ſin together, you ſhall ſmart together. Let this ſad example never be forgotten by you for this: Thoſe that were Confederates in ſin, are made inſtruments and occaſions of miſery each to other. Look not upon ſin in the pleaſure of it, but in the danger of it: The Wine ſparkles in the cup, but 'twill be poyſon in the belly. Fear the ſtrokes of God more then the ſtroaks of man: What's a fetter, a dungeon, a gallows to hell fire? Mortifie a ſpirit of pride Never ſuch pride amongſt the youth of the City as now; What vanity in apparel, what ſupercilioufneſs in carriage, what contempt of Authority? Oh, *be clothed with humility*, 1 Pet. 5. 5. Give not way to imaginary, ſpeculative heart ſins; Murder in the heart, will ſoon be Murder in the hand; uncleanneſs allowed in the thoughts, wil come to bodily uncleanneſs at the

laſt

laſt. Keep Satan at a diſtaace, if he get in, he'l be too hard for you.

To ſum up all: A dreadful ſpectacle of Gods Juſtice, and of the fruit of ſin, hath been lately ſet before you, we beſeech you in the Bowels of Jeſus Chriſt, break off from all your ſinful wayes by repentance; *One* is ſmitten that *many* may fear; He's a warning to you, take heed leſt you be made a warning unto others. If you would avoid his *end*, walk not in his *ſins*; as ſecure as you are, if you will allow your ſelves in that which is evil, you do not know whither the divel wil carry you in a way of ſin, or to what God will bring you in a way of puniſhment. *Stand in aw therefore and ſin not, Flee youthful luſts*, Pſ. 4.4. 2 Tim. 2.22. *Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fal*, 1 Cor. 10.12. Every day pray that God will keep you from and ſtrengthen you againſt temptation: Say not, 'tis not poſſible I ſhould ever be ſo vile as this Malefactor was; Alas, if God leave you you'l be as bad as he. *Bleſſed is the man that feareth always*. Prov. 28.14. In all things ſo carry your ſelves according to the rule of the Word, that you may neither fall into the hands of men, nor into the hands of God, which is far the moſt dreadful. *'Tis a fearful thing to fal into the hands of the living God*. Heb. 10.31.

That Governors and Governed may thus diſcharge their duties, ſhall be the great deſig[n] of

of our Ministrie by Gods assistance, and our constant prayer at the Throne of Grace.

Septemb. 11. 1657.

Edmund Calamy.
Arthur Jackson.
James Nalton.
Tho. Jacomb.
Robert Hutchison.
Thomas White.
Thomas Parson.
Thomas Doelittle.
Simeon Ashe.
Thomas Case.
Will. Taylo
Roger Dra[illegible].
Geo. Griffith.
Matthew Poole.
Dan. Batcheler.

FINIS.